Read the article and underline in green elements from the passage that are covered in the AQA syllabus. Then add points that are missing from the AQA syllabus.

5 Coaching Methods for Team Building from the Ryder Cup

**By Andy Grant, sports coach UK Coach Education Advisor**

The Ryder Cup of Golf is always one of my favourite sporting spectacles and the recent event in Medinah, Chicago definitely didn’t disappoint, being one of the most dramatic of all time. One of the fascinations I have with the competition is how the team Captains and the players have to completely change their mindset to become team players when 99% of their time they compete as individuals, frequently against many of their teammates.  As a coach I have always analysed the methods that the team Captains have used to try to develop team cohesion with players who are pre-programmed to compete as individuals. Here are my favourite five methods for team building in successful Ryder Cup teams.

**Find a common cause** Evident throughout the 2012 Ryder Cup was the European Team’s desire to win it for Seve Ballesteros. Ballesteros is generally regarded as the inspiration behind many of the successes of the European teams through his appearances from 1979-95 - and as captain in 1997. The 2012 Euro Captain Jose Maria Olazabal frequently evoked memories of Seve throughout the competition and had images of him on the sleeves of their players’ polo shirts and on their golf bag, Do it for Seve and what would Seve do? were referred to by the European players in the aftermath of their stunning comeback victory.

**Use a talisman** Successful European teams have generally made great use of a talisman. For many years it was Ballesteros and following him was Colin Montgomerie. For 2012 it was Ian Poulter. He secured four wins out of four, showed an ability to dig out a result when things were looking bleak and played with intensity. However, if coaches decide to use a talisman to bring the team together they need to select the right person. That person must have the personality to bring out the best in teammates. The talisman must be for the team first, second and third.

**Create teams within the Team** One of the key ingredients for the successful Team USA in the 2008 Ryder Cup was the concept of splitting the team of 12 into three smaller groups of four. USA captain Paul Azinger learnt about the concept of the Pods from watching a documentary on the Navy SEALS. Larger teams were divided into small groups – Pods - and they worked and lived together to get to know everything about each other. Azinger – and the US Navy – realised that large groups can’t become a team in anything other than in name. Azinger made three Pods of four that practiced together, ate meals together and would only be partnered in matches with someone from within the Pod.

**Select on personality rather than playing strengths** Azinger went even further with the Pod concept in 2008 when, after consultation with Ron Braund - a leading exponent of Personality Profiling and team building – he selected the groups based on the players’ personalities and cultural similarities - rather than their playing strengths and weaknesses (which had been their traditional strategy). The 2008 USA team formed three pods: Aggressive, Steady Eddies and Influencing. By matching personalities and cultural similarities the USA were able to regain the Ryder Cup. It is worth noting that Azinger had recognised that the European teams had long been able to take advantage of the concept of personality and cultural matching by pairing players of the same nationality (eg Ballesteros and Olazabal) and best friends such as Lee Westwood and Darren Clarke.

**Make every member feel important** The previous biggest come-from-behind win was by the USA in 1999 at Brookline. One painful lesson for the defeated team Europe was that all the players need to be fully involved and feel important. Captain Mark James used many of the same players to play in the four matches over Friday and Saturday, while some players weren’t involved until their singles match on the Sunday. Although this gave Europe a large lead to take into the final day it's said it had the effect of leaving some players tired and other players under-prepared and, it’s argued, feeling undervalued. This, coupled with the momentum of the USA team, led to the big turnaround. In contrast, in 2008 Azinger handed selection of three of his Captain’s picks to the players that had already qualified. Each of the three players in the Pod were allowed to select their fourth member. As well as being a very powerful use of empowering players in the decision making process, it ensured that the selected player had a naturally strong bond with their Pod members. Knowing you were chosen ahead of all the other available players instantly created a feel of being important.

**Andy’s Coaching Tip** Finally, my coaching tip is to read Cracking the Code by Paul Azinger and Ron Braund which reveals the secrets of the successful 2008 Ryder Cup USA team. I highly recommend this for coaches of all sports.

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